

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4504

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VETERANS' AFFAIRS

August 15, 2007

The Honorable Michael Chertoff  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

As I travel around the northern part of Vermont, I am hearing very deep concerns about the length of time it takes vehicles to cross the U.S.-Canadian border. As I understand it, delays from one to three hours are not unusual. While we all agree that we must secure our borders, we also need to ensure that we have in place a procedure that allows for the timely and efficient processing of customs and immigration checks. The current situation is simply unacceptable.

At the major Vermont border checkpoints, I understand that only a portion of the traffic lanes are being utilized. I have been told that this is due to a serious shortage in border patrol agents. As you can imagine, the resulting back up of vehicles and people has a profound effect on commerce and tourism, in addition to other economic repercussions. I have established a committee comprising Vermont business owners, local officials and law enforcement officers who are concerned about the increasing border crossing problems.

In the next few weeks I invite you to visit Vermont to witness first-hand the problems our citizens and our neighbors are experiencing so that we can then have a purposeful discussion as to what the Department of Homeland Security can do to rectify this situation. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue and I will be contacting you shortly to arrange our meeting.

Sincerely,



BERNARD SANDERS  
United States Senator